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ABSTRACT

This booklet shares what South Carolina teachers said during Teacher Talk, a series of regional dialogue sessions between teachers and the State Superintendent of Education in 1997. Teachers from all levels and disciplines participated in the meetings. Teachers identified learning activities that were highly effective for students, worked in small groups to develop ideas, and shared ideas with the large group. Next, they worked in small groups by grade level to discuss two predetermined issues, then provided responses to the issues. Finally, they named tools, techniques, and support needed for successful implementation of best practices. After introductory information, Section 1 of the booklet, "Teachers' Top Education Issues," discusses class size, accountability, professional development, parent involvement, teacher leadership, testing, public image, curriculum, at-risk students, school safety, discipline and management, technology, and licensure. Section 2, "Tools, Techniques, and Support," focuses on information related to local school districts, higher education, state department of education, and parents and communities. Section 3, "Learning Activity Ideas from Teacher Talk Participants," discusses activities at each grade level. Information from a Teacher Talk evaluation is included. (SM)

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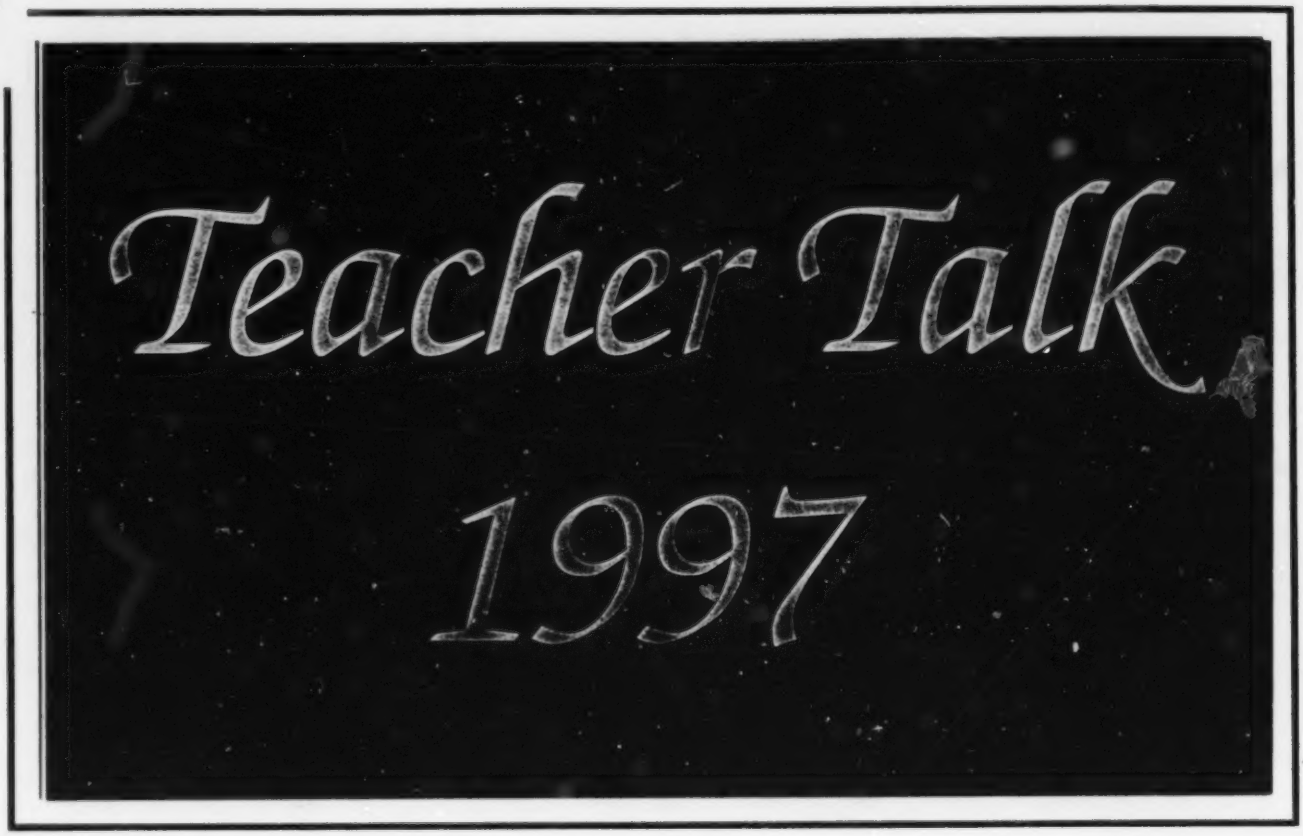

Report

September 1997

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South Carolina Department of Education

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Dedication

This is the Year of the Teacher! To acknowledge and honor the hard work and dedication of committed education professionals in classrooms across our state, we dedicate this document to the teachers of South Carolina.

September 1997

TEACHER TALK PARTICIPANTS
January, February, March 1997

Ada Patton, Rock Hill High
Allison Hunt, Castle Heights Middle
Alvarez Anderson, Teacher in Residence/SCCTR
Amanda Dunlap, North Myrtle Beach High
Ann Mohr, Oakview Elementary
Ann Shuler, Guinyard Elementary
Anne Boykin, Lee County Career Center
Anne Ledford, Fort Mill High
Anne Pillow, Beaufort High
Arla Cox, West Florence High
Arlene Puryear, Ridge Spring Monetta Elementary
Barbara Flemming Weston, Five Points High
Barbara Langley, Orangeburg 5
Barbara Thomas, Richland Northeast High
Beth Matsbo, Greenwood High
Beth Neal, JN Kellett Elementary
Betty Harrington, Manning Elementary
Betty Heriot, Bishopville Primary
Bleeka Wilform, York Junior High
Bonnie Disney, Sumter High
Bonnie Matheson, Great Falls Elementary
Bonnie Williams, Chesterfield High
Brenda Price, Springdale Elementary
Carol Armstrong, Midland Valley High
Carol Garrett, Silver Bluff High
Carol Morrissey, Newington Elementary
Caroline Geiger, Airport High
Carolyn Dawkins, Mary H. Wright Elementary
Carolyn Riddick, Hannah-Pamplico High
Cassandra Menning, St. Helena Elementary
Cathy Bell, Beaufort School District
Cathy Griffin, Northwestern High
Charity Young, Fort Mill High
Cheryl Stalvey, Johnakin Middle
Christopher Eugene Johnson, Beck Academy
Cindy Dawsey, Rains-Centenary Elementary
Cynthia Alford, Hillcrest High
Cynthia Jones, York Junior High
Cynthia Munn, Hannah-Pamplico Elementary
Dale Smith, Greenwood High
Daren Hutchison, JV Martin Junior High
Darlene Langley, McCormick Middle
Davie Pileggi, Ninety-Six High
Debbie Bowens-Davis, High Hills Elementary
Debbie Cooke, Pickens High
Debbie Keenan, Lancaster High
Deborah Adams, Ravenel Elementary
Deborah Hardin Davis, Wateree Elementary
Deborah Howard, Eastside High
Deborah Tate, Southside High
Debra Haselden, Startex Elementary
Della Bacote, Brennen Elementary
Denise Taylor, Berkeley Intermediate
Denise Zacherl, Sangaree Intermediate
Devonne Risher Smalls, WJ Keenan High
Donna Culclasure, Sandy Run Center
Doris Hedgepath, Aynor/Conway Career Center
Doris Hickson, SC Center/Teacher Recruitment
Doris McDonald, Rock Hill High
Dorothy Seale, Sullivan Middle
Dorothy Walker, Eau Claire High
Earline Haywood Ulmer, Calhoun County High
Edgar Dreher, Allendale-Fairfax High
Edie Robinson, Alcorn Middle
Eleanor Glover, Pendergrass Fairwold
Eleanor Logan, Dixie High
Elizabeth Gressette, Palmetto State Teacher's Assoc.
Elizabeth Hall, Wade Hampton High
Elizabeth Moore, Brockington Elementary
Elizabeth Ruff, Batesburg-Leesvillle Middle
Elizabeth Tigler, Clover High
Etrulia Dozier, Whittemore Park Middle
Euphemia Hopkins, Berkeley Middle
Fontaine Knox, Kingstree Junior High
Frances Dantzler, Lexington Middle
Gayle Morgan, Hannah-Pamplico High
H. M. Dixon, Hannah-Pamplico High
Inza Washington, WJ Keenan High
Iris Riley Tomah, Arden Elementary
Jackie Hicks, Clover High
Jackie Putnam, Cleveland Elementary
Jan Baskins, North Elementary
Jan McCarthy, Irmo High
Jan Nashatker, South Aiken High
Jane Dickert, North Augusta Elementary
Janet Miller, Ware Shoals High
Janice Belton-Owens, SC State University
Janice Bradley, Heath Springs Elementary
Jean Allman, Mullins High
Jean Floyd, Forestbrook Elementary
Jean McWhite, Hannah-Pamplico Elementary
Jeanie Dailey, Waccamaw High
Jerome Brown , Edisto Elementary
Jettie Smith, Starr-Iva Middle
Joan Smith, Barnwell High
Joan Wafer, Bennettsville Middle
JoAnn DuBose, Alcolu Elementary
Jonna Adcox, Kelly Edwards Elementary
Joyce Porter, Hannah-Pamplico High
Judi Inabinet, Marion Intermediate

Judith Heath, Monaview Elementary
Judith Jordan, Mount Gallant Elementary
Judy Amick, Mid-Carolina Middle
Julia White, Cleveland Elementary
Julie Hardwick, Socastee High
Kancy Tucker, Gettys Middle
Karen Bryant, Fairfield Primary
Karen McBryde, JN Kellett Elementary
Karen Neil, St. George Elementary
Karen Stewart, St. Andrew's High
Karen Warmoth, Independence Elementary
Katherine Gould, Scott's Branch High
Kathleen Elam, ZL Madden Elementary
Kathryn Murphy, Starr Elementary
Kathy Crain, Pine Street Elementary
Kathy Fields-Cauthen, Palmetto State Teachers Assoc.
Kathy Hope, WA Perry Middle
Kathy McCullough, Palmetto Primary
Kay Campbell, Johnston Elementary
Kay Farmer, Eastside High
Kay Powers, Leavelle McCampbell Middle
Kayette Meadows, SCEA
Kimberly Martin, Indian Land Middle
Kimmie Tomlinson, Lake City High
Laura Camp, Luther Vaughan Elementary
Laura Meyer, Georgetown High
Laura Moody, SC Center/Teacher Recruitment
Lemuel Patterson, McCormick Middle
Linda Davis, Edisto Elementary
Linda Heckle, Lexington Middle
Linda Singleton, Homewood Elementary
Linda Sue Wallace, Guinyard Elementary
Lisa Foster, Northside Middle
Lisa Hodierne, CC Blaney Elementary
Lisa Kelien, Beech Hill Elementary
Lisa Wyndham, Barnwell High
Lois Haselden, Cherryvale Elementary
Lou Ann Adams, Forest Circle Middle
Lucius Campbell, Socastee High
Lydia Goodwin, Hartsville High
Marcella Bremer, Lamar High
Margaret McCarson, Hillcrest High
Margaret Peach Wilson, McCracken Junior High
Margaret Scott, Greendale Elementary
Marguerite Jones, Spearman Primary
Marie Dukes, Walker-Gamble Elementary
Marie Walter, St. Andrew's High
Marilyn Montgomery, Dutch Fork High
Marsha Bahnmiller, Bates Middle
Martha Boswell, Manning High
Martha Brackin, Crosswell Elementary
Martha Butts, North Augusta High
Marva Coates, CR Neal-Communities in School
Mary Catherine McCallum, Chester Park Primary
Mary Dunbar, Pine Ridge Middle
Mary McConathy, Oakwood-Windsor Elementary
Mary Whaley, Carver-Edisto Middle
Mazie Lewis, Hyatt Park Elementary
Melissa Hinnant, Cherryvale Elementary
Mindy Hester, Laurens District 55 High
Mitzie Renwick, Fairfield Middle
Nan Cabaniss, John Ewing Junior High
Nancy Hanley, Anderson College
Palmira Torres, Boundary Street Elementary
Pamela Steele, Lexington Middle
Pamelia Liely-Brown, Terrell's Bay High
Pat Snider, Easley High
Patricia Morrow, Starr Elementary
Paulette King, CE Murray High
Peggy Goodwine, JP Thomas/McCants Elementary
Phillip Armstrong, Myrtle Beach High
Phyllis Coker, Manning Elementary
Phyllis Gantt, Wagener-Salley High
Priscilla Hutchison, East Elementary
Priscilla Watson, Greer High
Raul Bradley, North District Middle
Reba Gresham, CA Johnson High
Rebecca Bridges, Spearman Primary
Rebecca Rochester, Clover Middle
Rebecca Smith, Newberry Middle
Rick Ostrander, Latta High
Robert Chandler, Socastee High
Robin Hilts, Minnie Hughes Elementary
Ron Schwartz, Chesterfield High
Ronnie Duncan, Pickens High
Sallie Stephens, Walterboro High
Sara Burton, Batesburg-Leesville High
Sara Doolittle, Simpsonville Elementary
Sarah Aldridge, Fulmer Middle
Sheila Gallagher, Williams Middle
Shelley White Fones, Clemson University
Sherrie Morrison, Lexington High
Shirley Harris, Harold Johnson Elementary
Shirley Shuler, Chester Park Elementary
Shirley Willimon , Mauldin Elementary
Sue Matthews, Hartsville High
Susan Brewer, Camden High
Susan Hicks, Cheraw Primary
Susan Kelley, Keowee Elementary
Susan Thrasher, Lee Correctional Institution
Susan Wayman, Hamilton Career Center
Suzanne Joye, White Knoll Middle
Suzanne Riley, Chapin High
Tammy Ridgeway, Alcorn Middle
Tamria Jamison, Aynor High
Therease Meteirer, Mary Ford Elementary
Tracy Metcalf, Garrett Academy of Technology
Trudy Crittendon, Westside High
Vicki Costas, North Myrtle Beach Primary
Virginia Baker, DuBose Middle
Wendell Pope, Olympia School
William Austin, Pocalla Springs Elementary

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Introduction

The vital role of the classroom teacher in the success of our students is one aspect of education upon which we all agree. Over the past several years South Carolina educators have been involved in many efforts to improve our educational system. These efforts include curriculum frameworks, more rigorous academic standards, improved achievement assessment strategies, deregulation for increased flexibility and much more. None of these will contribute to enhanced opportunities for students to succeed in our schools without the committed involvement of teachers in our classrooms.

Last year the State Superintendent of Education asked members of the Department of Education and representatives of the South Carolina Education Association, the Palmetto Teachers Association and the South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment to participate in the planning of *Teacher Talk*, a series of regional dialogue sessions between teachers and the State Superintendent. It is important to share with all the teachers of South Carolina some of what was said and done during the *Teacher Talk* sessions. Capturing and documenting the richness and spirit of these meetings have proven to be difficult tasks; however, we have created this document in an effort to share the ideas and wisdom of those who participated with a wider audience.

The assistance of the staff members of the associations involved in planning and carrying out the meetings, along with the creative ideas and insights shared by the teachers who participated in *Teacher Talk*, is greatly appreciated. Teachers are vital to the success of our children and our schools. Their dedication and commitment to achieving excellence for every child in South Carolina are the keys to our past and future success.

Voices From the Field

Teacher Talk 1997

1997 Teacher Talk Meetings: Voices From the Field

The South Carolina State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Barbara S. Nielsen, invited 300 exceptional public school teachers to three regional Teacher Talk meetings in Myrtle Beach, Columbia and Spartanburg in January, February and March 1997. The Palmetto State Teachers Association, the S.C. Center for Teacher Recruitment and the S.C. Education Association nominated participants for the meetings.

Teachers came from all areas of the state, from cities and from rural areas. Teachers of all ages and disciplines. Teachers of the handicapped and the gifted. Teachers from a variety of public schools whose combined experience was well over a thousand years.

Teachers from all levels and disciplines were invited from all areas of the state. The group contained many Teachers of the Year and other honorees. But they did not come to be honored this time. They came to share and to be heard.

Dr. Nielsen's vision for Teacher Talk meetings was to gather ideas from teachers on best practices in the classroom and to hear their thoughts on various educational issues and how the State Department of Education and others can work with teachers to improve the teaching/learning process. The Teacher Talk meetings provided an informative and candid exchange of opinions, concrete recommendations and innovative ideas and solutions based on the participants' vast experiences. This report shares the many voices from the Teacher Talk meetings.

Each Teacher Talk participant started by identifying a learning activity which has proven to be highly effective for students. Teachers worked in small groups to develop their ideas. Then they shared ideas with the entire group. Some of the ideas of this exercise can be found in the section on **Learning Activity Ideas From Teacher Talk Participants.**

Next, small groups of teachers were formed by grade levels: elementary, middle and high. Each group chose two issues to discuss from a pre-identified list. After intense discussion, the small groups identified the most important topics within the issues they chose. Teachers were asked to identify the implications of these topics for best practice and practical application in the classroom. A summary of their responses can be found in the section called **Teachers' Top Education Issues.**

Finally, all participants were asked to name tools, techniques and support needed for successful implementation of best practices. Teachers made recommendations for local school districts, higher education institutions, the State Department of Education, parents and communities. A summary of this activity can be found in the section called **Tools, Techniques and Support.**

The last section of this document details a very thorough evaluation of the Teacher Talk meetings. Dr. Nielsen wanted to ensure that the time teachers spent would be productive, meaningful, and quality professional development. More than 95% of the teachers rated the overall value of the program at a very high to extremely high level. Many teachers suggested expanding Teacher Talk to allow more teachers to participate.

The Department of Education plans to hold Teacher Talk sessions each year to enhance continued input and sharing of ideas, concerns, and recommendations from teachers in the classroom. After all, if all students are to achieve at high academic levels, classroom teachers will get them to those levels.

Teachers' Top Education Issues

Teachers' Top Education Issues

The following issues were chosen by participants of the Teacher Talk meetings. The comments, ideas and opinions of participating teachers have been condensed into this narrative form. The issues the teachers chose to discuss are listed below. The number in parentheses indicates the number of teacher groups that chose to discuss the issue.

- Class Size (8)
- Accountability (8)
- Professional Development (7)
- Parent Involvement (6)
- Teacher Leadership (5)
- Time (5)
- Testing (4)
- Public Image (4)
- Curriculum (4)
- At-Risk Students (4)
- School Safety (4)
- Discipline and Management (4)
- Technology (3)
- Professional Licensure (2)

Class Size

Class size has a direct effect on how well a teacher can do the job. Do the schools, districts and the state adhere to class size requirements? How can the maximum class size be reduced? Teachers raise many important questions and issues regarding class size.

Teachers believe strongly that class size affects student achievement.

The Effect of Class Size on Instruction

Teachers believe strongly that class size affects student achievement. Smaller classes facilitate character and development, social skills and reduce discipline problems. Smaller classes impact directly on the students' participation, the teacher's awareness, the ability to provide individualized remediation and school-to-home contact. Smaller classes make it easier for teachers to be accountable.

Large class size makes the use of alternative assessments almost impossible. The lack of individualized instruction impacts negatively on learning, testing and discipline and causes an increase in the dropout rate.

One way to deal with this issue may be a flexible school day; offering early and late classes would reduce the numbers in each class and accommodate high school students who have jobs.

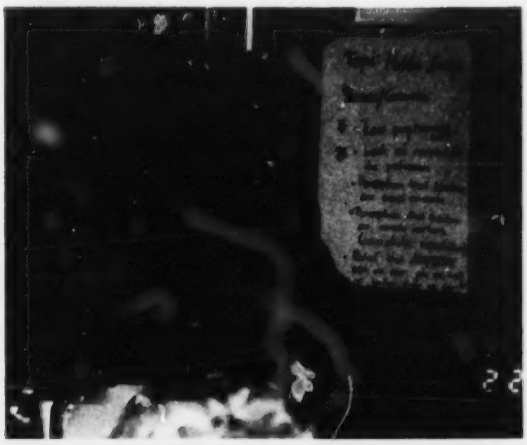
Student/Teacher Ratio

Teachers believe that serious evaluation of class size is needed. Several mention the desire to have the student/teacher ratio match the athlete/coach ratio. Whatever the standard, it should be consistent across the state in districts, schools, and class-

rooms. One example might be K-3 (20/1); 4-6 (25/1); and over these grades additional help is needed.

One teacher states: "Student/teacher ratio should reflect the number of students taught in the actual classroom. Sometimes there is a disparity with these numbers." Another says the "special needs students should be weighted due to the amount of attention they demand."

One teacher suggests that "in the case of mainstreamed students, assistance be provided through an inclusion model with a resource person to sustain and maintain classroom management and instruction." Class size could be determined using "at risk indicators" developed by the National Dropout Prevention Center.



Lack of Physical Space

Teachers say that the space allotted in the classroom is inadequate. More desk space is needed for computers. They are concerned about the space requirements of full day kindergarten.

Accountability

Accountability sparked more discussion than most issues. How will accountability be meted out? For what will teachers be responsible? Will there be appropriate support of teachers to help them meet accountability standards? How will the standards be carried out? And what is the role of parents? All these are important questions asked by teachers regarding a proposed accountability measure. Following are specific issues teachers raised regarding accountability.

One teacher suggests that "there should be highly-defined criteria for accountability developed by teachers."

What is the Criteria for Accountability?

Teachers feel strongly that teachers are not solely responsible for student achievement, but that the students, parents and school administrators share responsibility. They want teachers involved in the development of such a plan.

Teachers believe an accountability measure must be fair for all types of schools. The goals and expectations must be stated clearly. Accountability should be based on individual student growth, not test scores. Students should not be promoted until grade level skills are met. And the assessment should not only include BSAP results, but a wide range of measures.

One teacher suggests: "There should be highly-defined criteria of accountability developed by teachers. This plan should be implemented by teachers. We could have Master Teachers in individual schools who carry out the program. These Master Teachers could still teach part time. There should not be positions created only to implement this program! Let us have control of our profession!"

Support for Teachers

While in the stages of development and during implementation, teachers need support to meet the standards of an accountability plan. Support should come in the form of training, time, smaller classes, and instructional tools. They need support from their administrators to meet higher expectations. Teachers are concerned

about inadequate representation on a state level committee currently studying accountability.

Teachers are concerned about the legislature expecting more while funding less. They want more support if more will be expected of them. They need the tools to meet accountability standards; this and only this will produce higher standards and professionalism to improve student performance.

Lower class size plays a part in ensuring accountability. Large classes and heterogeneous grouping negates the probability of achieving higher standards for all students. Smaller classes help in multiple areas: grades, achievements, discipline, dropouts, and testing results.

Lower class size plays a part in ensuring accountability.

The state committee meeting on accountability does not have enough classroom teachers from all levels. The legislature and business leaders need to hear from teachers. Teachers must be given more say in what happens! One teacher asks, "Why are we not asked to be on the Governor's PASS task force? How do you get there?"

Some feel the accountability plan that has been discussed in the past is punitive rather than constructive. "Everyone is upset when scores are not high, but make excuses for individual students who do not do well. The public does not understand numbers being reported," says another teacher.

To comply with accountability, teachers must have the support of school administration. Administration must pull out disruptive students, support discipline measures, provide appropriate staff support, and give moral support.

Methods for Implementation

Exactly how will an accountability plan be implemented? Teachers suggest methods to consider when developing the parameters. One method in helping teachers meet accountability is to lower student/teacher ratios. Pre- and post-evaluation and authentic assessment for all types of learners are examples of ways to measure true progress. Social promotion and alternative academic settings are important issues to consider.

They believe accountability should be at the individual class level and students should be assessed over time. Educators should assess students each year and hold all teachers accountable, not just the math or reading teachers.

The Accountability of Parents

Teachers are quite concerned about parental involvement and responsibility. They see the parents as partners in ensuring a child's success in school. They want parents held accountable as well.

Parents should ensure that students attend school, that they are physically prepared (rested, proper nutrition), and that they have an environment conducive to study. Parents should support the teachers. A teacher says, "Other states may allow 'neglect petitions' for parents. Is this possible here?"

Another teacher asserts, "Parents need to be held accountable for homework, books being brought home, and TV time at home. Parents can't say 'I can't do anything with Johnnie. You [the teacher] make him do well in school.'"

Some teachers realize that most parents do the best they can and that teacher complaints will not help their ability to get involved.

Teacher Preparation

How will teachers prepare for the new accountability standards? Teachers need a clear understanding of what is expected of them. They need professional develop-

ment and effective evaluations, but they know they must also take it upon themselves to possess the latest knowledge in their field as well as in current events.

There is so much emphasis on test scores that teachers are often distracted from the task at hand -- teaching. Teachers must prepare lessons to address curriculum, be available for special help, be knowledgeable and current in content, keep abreast of current world and professional issues/events, and be sensitive to student needs.

They need training on how to deal with students with special needs. Most often they are not prepared for special education, reading, handicaps, etc.

Teachers want an effective evaluation program. Says one teacher, "Good teachers should not have to carry poor or mediocre teachers. Reward and build up the good teachers, not by adding more paper work. Get rid of teachers who are not doing their job. Stop putting unqualified people in the classroom!"

Professional Development

Teachers want quality, relevant professional development opportunities. They want to be involved in the design of these learning experiences. Leave time or compensatory time for professional development is important to them. The availability of mentoring for first-year teachers is critical.

Crafting Quality Staff Development

Teachers believe that district staff development activities should keep teachers up to date on content in subject areas. But staff development should address individual professional needs and not offer a 'blanket' program which ignores the individual's needs. "Professional development should be designed to help teachers stay abreast of trends that are ongoing to help improve our students' education," says one teacher.

They want to be able to choose their own professional development activities. They want current information on important new issues and developments in education. Sometimes staff development is viewed as a punishment. Says one teacher, "We need staff development that prepares us for curricular changes, requires teacher input, is positive, pertinent, and content specific for all, meets the individual needs of each teacher, and is not top-down directed." Giving teachers the opportunity to create their own plan will give them the buy-in they need. They recognize that the ADEPT model will allow them to build their own professional development plan.

Teachers want quality, relevant professional development opportunities. They want to be involved in the design of these learning experiences.

Time and Scheduling Issues

Teachers need time and appropriate scheduling to take advantage of professional development. They want more staff development days built into the calendar. They need release time for curriculum development.

They want to be treated as professionals with compensation of time or money for time spent in professional development activities. Several teachers thought regularly scheduled Teacher Talk sessions would be beneficial.

Mentoring

The mentoring of first-year teachers is an important issue. It was suggested that the first year teacher have a support network and meet twice monthly with the principal to keep abreast of what is required and is happening in the school. Mentoring will improve the transfer of knowledge to new teachers and thus improve student learning. One teacher suggests that with any change in assignments in the primary school the teacher should get a mentor.

Parent Involvement

Ways to Get the Community Involved

Communities must value education. Teachers have many ideas about ways to get community members involved in the schools. Businesses must be supportive of parents when the parents need to attend a school function. Employers often dock the parent/employee, which penalizes them for being involved. Somehow businesses need to give parents time off for conferences. Perhaps the school could send a letter explaining and outlining the need for a parent conference.

In some communities, churches are positive influences in gaining support of the community for educators. "In my community a church recognized teachers (retired and employed), then held a reception afterwards," says one teacher. "You could have an Education Sunday or a Parenting Club."

Service learning is an excellent way to get the community involved in education and education involved in the community.

Teachers must have the support and involvement of parents and the community.

Ways to Get the Parents Involved

Many practical ideas were offered for ways to get parents involved. Teachers see the need for a school plan to involve parents. Teachers must get to know parents personally, and there must be follow-up.

Some of the ideas the teachers suggest are:

- Muffins for Mom and Doughnuts for Dad;
- Parenting Club - birth to 5 - contact churches to find out who has been born;
- More open houses;
- Good news notes to students;
- Once a month, good news phone calls;
- Talking "good" about ourselves and schools;
- We need to do open house both semesters if on block scheduling;
- "Brag Rag" - four-page newspaper on success of teachers/staff/students. Keeps community informed about what teachers are doing; and
- PU letter - if a student uses profanity, they must write what was said, who heard, etc. If third time, parent must come and stay with student for one hour and read letter (Profanity Usage = PU).

Teacher Leadership

Teachers want the opportunity to become leaders and feel there are ways administrators can facilitate this process. They want training at the state, local and national levels. And they want the power to make real decisions at the school.

Developing Teacher Leaders

Teachers agree that the opportunity to serve as a leader is one of the most valuable professional experiences available or possible. As a teacher leader, a teacher's depth of knowledge, confidence, and teaching ability is strengthened. This opportunity is one of the few times they get a "pat on the back" which enhances their self-esteem and enthusiasm.

Teachers crave time to grow professionally. They want time to be active in the community, and they want time to be active in their professional organizations, and time for professional development activities. Teachers want to help plan staff development made available to them. They like the idea of National Board Certification. One teacher suggested that there be a state framework for teacher training and that higher education follow these guidelines for teacher preparation.

As part of the teacher leader responsibility, they want a mentor program in which a beginning teacher is matched with a "seasoned" teacher. They caution, "Don't throw new teachers to the wolves." A suggestion for the mentor program would be to have first year teachers teach a half day and follow their mentor for the remainder of the day.

Teachers agree that the opportunity to serve as a leader is one of the most valuable professional experiences available or possible.

Incentives

There should be incentives for teachers. To serve as teacher leaders, compensatory time or stipends will encourage teacher leaders to serve. Seasoned teachers need both financial incentive and release time to mentor new teachers. It was suggested that there be compensation in the form of teacher interns for teacher leaders who must be away from the classroom.

Teachers need more information on the responsibilities of a teacher leader before accepting the position. They want to know the criteria for selection and the level of power they will have, once accepted.

Support for Teacher Leadership

Teacher leaders need support to be effective. They want to share in the administrative "power" in decision making with staff and faculty. They want more say in issues regarding the school budget and curriculum. Teacher leaders have the responsibility to speak for education with business leaders, the school board and superintendent, and legislators.

Time Issues

Teachers want and need time for professional development activities during inservice days and not on teacher work days. They want to have more control of their time and be able to teach without additional duties which cut into planning time.

Staff Development

Many teachers say that staff development should not be held the first week of school. It should be a paid weekend or time during the summer with relevant topics and presenters. Staff development should directly affect teachers in the classroom. They want summer classes that count towards professional development. One teacher suggests that teacher work days be just that -- work days -- not staff development time.

Another teacher says: "Teacher instruction cannot be replaced by any amount of Saturday school or monetary arrangement -- teachers need to be in school. Districts should adhere to attendance policies -- no more 'pay' for credit."

Teacher Empowerment

Site-based management should be used to deal with time issues. Teachers need to have adequate time to prepare for change. Some suggest allowing teachers to decide the best way to use their inservice days, then compensate them for extra days. Teachers want the power to set their own time blocks for teaching a particular subject. One teacher advises, "Teachers -- do your groundwork when making proposals to administrators, they will be more willing to listen."

Scheduling

Time is short in a regular work day. Teachers are frustrated by the lack of control they have over their time. More planning time is needed, including individual planning, common planning, and staff development. A teacher's time is managed by others. Teachers spend time on bus duty, lunchroom duty, administrative chores, and/or holding other teacher's classes when substitutes are not available. There are too many interruptions during planning times to make the time productive.

Paraprofessionals can help small groups of teachers in copying papers, locating research, and other chores. Sometimes teachers have up to five preparations which does not give them adequate time to prepare lessons. Some A/B Block teachers have only 90 minutes planning time per week -- this is not enough time to plan.

Testing

A variety of issues come into play about testing. Teachers like authentic assessment; however, there is a disparity between this type of assessment and the tests which are given. Often a match does not exist between what is tested and what is taught. Most tests emphasize basic skills, and teachers want to teach beyond that level. They believe too much emphasis is placed on testing and not enough on teaching and learning.

Teachers believe too much emphasis is placed on testing and not enough on teaching and learning.

Most tests ignore learning styles and ability levels, therefore standardized testing should not be the only measure. Most tests simply measure retention of material. Experience should be measured as well as intelligence and ability. Teachers want to use different testing instruments, including traditional and portfolios. They want authentic assessment which is ongoing and developmentally-appropriate. "New tests are coming with BSAP that are hands-on," says one teacher. "Since we are measured one way, our teaching will go that way."

Parent involvement is important regarding how their child tests. Parents should come to the school to talk with school counselors and teachers about tests and their importance. Teachers admit there is a significant difference between students whose basic needs are met and students who have to provide for their own survival.

Several teachers agree that there is no use for the MAT-7 in the 11th grade. Students do not take this test seriously after they have already passed the Exit Exam. It is difficult to test 11th graders who did not pass the Exit Exam in the 10th grade.

Another teacher says, "We do not need two different tests on alternate years. Students should have one test every other year. Put the saved money back in the classroom or in teacher development."

Public Image

Teacher Talk teachers were prolific on issues relating to the public image of education and educators. They know there is a general lack of respect for the profession. The pay is low and it is considered "women's work." However, teachers realize that they are part of the solution to this problem. They are the spokespersons for the profession. But they need the support of education leaders.

Public Perceptions of Public Education

Teachers believe there is a general lack of respect for education and educators. The public believes that teachers are paid well, work few hours, and have too many paid holidays. Teachers are perceived as social servants. The public believes anyone could be a teacher. Currently, parents and students believe good teachers are only waiting until they can "climb" to the guidance or administrative level. Public perception must be changed.

The public image of education is closely related to community involvement. Business cannot conceive of not having a lunch break or paying for your own classroom supplies.

Teacher Pay

Teachers say that their compensation must improve to a professional level if they are to have the respect they deserve. "The salary cap is horrendous!" says one teacher. There is no incentive in salaries after 17 years. Veteran teachers are being punished.

Teachers are moonlighting because they often find their salaries do not meet financial obligations. Teachers often cannot afford to send their own children to college. Perhaps the S.C. Department of Education and the state legislature can develop a plan to offer scholarships for children of educators to state institutions of higher learning.

The Teachers' Responsibility

Teachers feel strongly that they serve as a model of the profession in the classroom and the community. They must put forth a good image to improve the perception of education. They must be positive and proud about the profession.

When teachers hear negative comments about themselves and their chosen profession, it affects their self-esteem. One teacher says "Every school has teachers at the top and bottom levels. We must find a way to rid our profession of the substandard teachers. The 'surplus' of substandard teachers seems to end up at the middle school level, where they do not want to be. Therefore, unhappy 'substandard' teachers produce unhappy 'substandard' students."

New teachers must not be given a "sink or swim" situation. Teachers are leaving the profession because they are given impossible situations. More men are needed in the teaching profession. Males are needed to fill the void of no fathers or role models in many homes.

The Effect of Public Relations

Teachers believe public relations, or the lack of, is a major factor that contributes to a poor public image. "Educators are the worst public relations people; we are our worst enemies. Superintendents, district personnel, administrators, guidance counselors and teachers must rally together to support the most rewarding profession. One

Teachers feel strongly that they serve as a model of the profession in the classroom and the community. They must put forth a good image to improve the image of education.

big suggestion: we must stop the gossiping," says a teacher. Many teachers caution others to be careful what they say outside school.

Communication is a key to improving the perception. Teachers say they have a great deal to do with their own public image and they should "talk it up" as a professional. The public must be informed about all academic and other classroom achievements. What is needed is more newspaper coverage of academics, not just athletics. Teachers should send more positive news to papers. It would be helpful if every school had a PR person or a student who is responsible for the school's press releases.

Communication is a key to improving the perception. The public must be informed about all academic and other classroom achievements.

Leadership for a Better Public Image

How can leadership for the schools make a difference in public image? First, teachers say there must be financial accountability and equity. State leaders should not just "talk the talk" but they need to "walk the walk." No favoritism should be allowed.

One teacher says, "There is too much favoritism in school districts throughout the state. The 'good ol boy' system must be annihilated. Even more importantly, the hierarchy of community involvement must be removed. There is a problem with the power of any business/industry or church dictating policies, codes, and practices in a school system."

We must have the support of the State Department of Education on the practices and needs of school districts in South Carolina. Another teacher says "School public relations professionals and State Department of Education officials should recognize that after last year's bad press, we need to learn from this."

There is a lack of communication between State Department of Education, school administrators and teachers. Forums like "Teacher Talk" can open the lines of communications. But teachers wonder how will the information from Teacher Talk be used?

One teacher suggests that to truly provide effective leadership for education, supervisors, including all administrators, should be required to return to the classroom periodically. Board members should spend one to two weeks shadowing a teacher before he/she is allowed to serve. A legislator should spend one to two weeks shadowing a teacher before he/she can vote on any laws affecting education.

Curriculum

Curriculum issues sparked much discussion among teachers. As the curriculum they teach becomes more demanding, they need increased support in terms of training and supplies. They want to teach the basic skills and beyond within a consistent curriculum guide. Before changes are made in the curriculum, teachers want a plan backed by research. They want to use a variety of assessment tools. Smaller classes will help them be more effective.

Funding

The state mandates curriculum changes without providing financial support. Teachers need financial and staff support for the expanded curriculum demand. Funding needs to support curriculum, not just textbooks and supplies.

Classrooms should be adequately equipped with necessary materials for instruction to all learning styles. School districts should have choices on whether to purchase basal texts or trade books.

Teachers want more consistency across districts and states. There is too much jumping on and off bandwagons.

Instructional Support

Many teachers emphasize the importance of meeting the basic educational needs of students, especially in lower grades. Basic skills should be the focus of instruction.

Alignment and benchmarks should follow some sensible curriculum guidelines. Alternative assessment should be used for curriculum evaluation using portfolios, checklists, performance-based assessments, real-life problem solving, with the teacher serving as the assessor of students' skills.

A curriculum coordinator is needed within the school setting to observe lessons, visit classrooms, conference and mentor teachers, and organize meaningful grade level discussions across grade levels. Universal guidelines are needed for district textbook adoption.

Teachers see more and more added to the curriculum, such as sex education, empathy training, etc. There is an increased teacher work load with larger class sizes, requiring more time for planning. What is needed are smaller classes and fewer teacher preparations. Instructional time should not be interrupted to perform non-instructional tasks.

One teacher says, "Teachers are told what to do. Guidelines are presented as mandates. Science, math, and language arts are not taught consistently." There should be an attempt to match teachers with curriculum. Teachers should be able to use the teaching method most effective for them.

In the classroom, teachers should use a combination of techniques such as whole language and phonics. There is a concern about having only two tracks - college or technical. Some believe there needs to be a general track. Students need more flexibility than can be found in two tracks. Students do not know at 16 how to make a life decision. Tech Prep courses are rigorous but class enrollment is like a "dumping ground." Good Tech Prep training results in students being prepared for BSAP.

Some teachers are concerned about departmentalization. A solution may be team teaching, where everything is interrelated and teachers work together. Others suggest departmentalizing the upper elementary grades to specialize in each content area.

Students Who Are At Risk

Students who are at risk pose a special challenge to teachers. Instruction for these students should be structured and individualized. Teachers do not feel adequately trained to deal with these students. More training, even at the undergraduate level, is needed. Parent education and involvement are very important to working with the special students.

Instruction

Students who are at risk need a highly-structured basics approach to instruction beginning at an early age. Teachers should determine where the child is academically

and teach from that point, not starting with where they should be. These special students need individualized instruction. Selective inclusion is a possible method of working with at-risk youth.

Students who are at risk need a highly-structured basics approach to instruction beginning at an early age.

Teacher Training

The teacher's attitude toward at-risk students has a lot to do with his or her effectiveness. There should be more training for teachers of at-risk students and funding for them to observe model practices.

Teachers also need support from special services. Interagency cooperation will help identify, serve, and train teachers on how to deal with special needs. There must be funding for pre-service training at the undergraduate level, and ongoing inservice training for teachers. This is necessary to help teachers become responsible and accountable for meeting the needs of at-risk students.

Parents

Parent education is a major issue in dealing with at-risk youth. Teachers suggest attaching a mandate to welfare reform to teach parenting skills. Some suggest mandatory parent involvement for parents on public assistance while the schools provide child care so they can participate.

School Safety

School safety is a concern of many teachers. Teachers want zero tolerance for violence in schools, and they need the support of administrators. Parents and the community must be part of the solution to school safety problems. Schools should have an operative safety plan in place. Teachers and students need training to deal effectively with conflicts. Teachers offer some ideas to help maintain safe schools.

Administration

Teachers want zero tolerance for violence. Inside the classroom, teachers need quick access to administration when needed. They want administrators to be visible during the change of class. An open channel of communication is important among all levels of the administration and faculty.

There should be a standardized procedures and documents for reporting of crimes. Police should be called when rules are violated. Tougher consequences must be carried out from the top down.

Safety plans

A statewide safety plan, which includes health and physical concerns, should be implemented. All students and teachers need to be aware of school safety practices and practice them periodically.

Parent/Community Support

There must be open lines of communication among all levels of the community and service agencies. Community support, such as social services, Crimestoppers, the health department, business and industry, churches and local chambers of commerce, is important. Many of the problems related to safety issues are social promotion, dropouts, drugs, weapon availability and lack of parent accountability.

Student Issues

Students should not have to fear going to the bathroom, lunch room or the playground. Peer mediation and conflict resolution should be taught so that students are involved and part of the solution.

Teacher Training

Training in peer mediation and early intervention is needed starting in the lower grades. Teachers should be informed about students with criminal records so they can deal with these students more effectively. Teachers need to be made aware of drug problems on campus and continue drug awareness programs.

Teachers are not trained police officers and should not be responsible for policing school grounds. Many teachers are responsible for searching students, breaking up fights, and some are not trained in passive restraint. What is the compensation for injury in breaking up a fight? Training in passive restraint is essential.

Teachers want zero tolerance for violence in schools, and they need the support of administrators.

Possible Solutions

Teachers identified many methods for increasing school safety. Teachers say they need emergency buttons, beepers or telephones in their classrooms. Clear book bags will keep students from concealing weapons and other dangerous materials. Uniforms have success in some school districts. One teacher suggests that the legislature consider a bill to make tougher consequences for violations of safety in schools. The state law which mandates a 10-day expulsion hinders safety problems in certain situations.

Discipline and Management

Teachers seem most dismayed with middle school students, especially ninth graders. Teachers of students this age need assistance in dealing with these youngsters. Effective teaching, some agree, is the best tool for discipline problems. As with many previous issues, having smaller classes goes a long way toward helping teachers maintain control over the classroom. Teachers demand support from administrators regarding their decisions on student discipline.

Middle School Students

One of the biggest issues regarding discipline and classroom management is ninth graders. The inclusion of ninth grade at the high school causes a dramatic increase in discipline problems. Some 75 percent of all discipline referrals are written for ninth graders. These students function better at the junior high rather than high school. At a minimum, they should be in a school-within-a-school situation. Teachers wonder how they can best serve ninth graders.

One teacher states, "The middle school focus seems to encourage students to 'feel good' about themselves, even if they are failing. Middle school is time wasted as far as academics; they lose what they learned in elementary school. Middle school educators are realizing the need to go back to drawing board with emphasis on academics and discipline."

Classroom Management

The best discipline is good teaching. Good management prevents discipline problems. Discipline can be taught throughout the curriculum -- through character building

and modeling by teachers. Teachers should model respect with the support of administrators/parents.

Class Size

The best discipline is good teaching! Good management prevents discipline problems. Discipline can be taught throughout the curriculum.

Smaller classes should be the number one priority. Student/teacher ratios overall (across school districts or even within individual schools) do not accurately reflect crowded classroom conditions. When there are 25 to 30 students in one class, it creates unnecessary discipline problems. Large classes set up the teachers and students for failure in the area of discipline and management. Ideally, says one teacher, class size should be limited to 18.

Support That is Consistent

Administrative and parental support are critical to maintaining a cohesive, integrated discipline/management system. Teachers must have support from the district and state to enforce the discipline plans. There must be uniform consequences for "bad" behavior. Administration must help with discipline. One teacher suggests having a team that follows the discipline problems of a student even when they change schools.

Teachers and students need a well-defined list of legal limits regarding a discipline plan. There should be consistency in procedures and policy within school. "Sometimes it seems we never stick with anything long enough to make it work," says one teacher. "We don't need quick fixes -- don't jump from one program/solution to the other."

Intervention

Every school needs a crisis intervention person and place for removing disruptive students immediately from classrooms, i.e. Rock Hill's Recovery Room. A Recovery Room provides out-of-class space for immediate support. Children have opportunity to "cool-down" and return to the classroom after control has been reestablished. Perhaps the General Assembly could fund an alternative school after school, 4-8 p.m.

Technology

Teachers have a concern about availability of technology in their schools and whether the technology they have is up-to-date. They believe districts and schools should have a technology plan in place. Teachers themselves need training, and they want the chance to talk with business about the needs they have in this area.

Liability

Where does a teacher's responsibility lie in monitoring student exposure on the Internet? There are many liability issues with copyrights and license as well. Liability issues need to be addressed as well as student access and teacher responsibility.

Computers and Classroom Instruction

Limited student access is a problem. The concept of a "computer in each classroom" does not mean anything if a student is denied access to the technology. State frameworks should be mandated regarding computer access.

There should be age-appropriate technology emphasis in schools, e.g., keyboard-

ing in kindergarten. Keyboarding classes are essential beginning in the early grades.

Standardized testing, such as the BSAP test, should address computer proficiency and knowledge.

Technology is a great equalizer as far as information. Students in rural areas can get the same information as others. Technology is a wonderful tool. We must teach students to use it efficiently and effectively. It cannot replace thinking and reading skills.

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Computer Use in Schools

One of the biggest concerns teachers have is the quality of the technology available to them. The software/hardware are not always current. New texts come with multimedia accessories and schools do not have the technology to use them. The tools that make technology accessible also need attention.

Often teachers do not have access to telephones, so use of technology is limited. They need teaching tools like CD Rom, laser discs and videos. Administrators should listen to businesses and teachers -- "if IBMs are used in businesses, why do schools use Apples?"

Schools and districts need comprehensive technology plans so there is consistency with technology from school to school. Sometimes teachers get computers from PTA's and other organizations and teachers wonder how do these gifts fit into the overall technology plan?

Some schools have labs of 25 computers but have closed them down because no one staffs them. They are available only to "whole class" activities.

Equity is identified as an important issue. Do rich districts have the advantage when it comes to technology? There should be equal access to computers in all schools.

Teacher Training

Teachers believe that all technology training should be hands-on, not lecture or on paper only. This training could use interactive media. The training should be mandated and focus on curricular applications and mandated state frameworks and go beyond drill/practice. Teacher competency can be improved through field-based experiences on a variety of levels.

Teachers need time to talk with businesses and industries to see what is needed from our students. A lag will always exist between business needs and what schools produce; teachers must be kept informed.

Those from the technology field who train the students need to be teacher-trained. These experts in technology who train our students need to be trained to work with students.

Licensure

Teachers are not opposed to licensure, but they have concerns regarding how it will be implemented. They want plenty of training and time for preparation. They hope the certification will be portable.

Teacher Training and Certification

A stringent pre-service program is crucial before a more rigorous licensure system is implemented. The training should be consistent beginning with teacher prepa-

To implement a licensure program for teachers a stringent pre-service must take place. The training should be consistent beginning with teacher preparation in higher education on into teacher inservice.

ration in higher education on into teacher inservice. Some teachers believe that licensure, accountability, and pay should be interrelated.

Teachers want an internship for recertification, which would allow them to get innovative ideas to use in classrooms. This would also provide additional resource persons and resources to use. This certification would offer six credit hours and provide opportunities for teachers to grasp the meaning of why they teach what they do.

National Board Certification or national guidelines would help teachers in classroom. They need consistency in teacher training and expectations; it is necessary for a more mobile society.

Teachers believe that training must be provided for substitutes and critical needs teachers. Critical needs certification teachers should be used more effectively.

Concerns About Licensure

Teachers expressed many concerns about licensure. They ask if the certification is transferrable among districts within the state and outside the state. Would the licensure program help the teacher in the classroom?

They like National Board Certification, but see among the problems the reimbursement of the fee and administrative cooperation. They want the process to be more than a showcase or paper chase. The criteria must be fair and reflect everyday teaching practices. Many excellent teachers have not passed. What are the ramifications if they do not pass? What happens when community finds out? It does not suggest excellence as a teacher.

There is a concern about the implications of practically anyone being allowed to teach when there is a shortage. The reasons for the shortage should be fixed instead of using a band-aid approach.

Tools, Techniques and Support

Tools, Techniques and Support

Teachers were asked to identify what they need from their school districts, higher education, the State Department of Education, parents and the community to help them do a better job in the classroom. The information gathered from the Teacher Talk teachers is capsulized in the following statements.

Local School Districts

More and Better Communication

- Teachers want more communication on all levels - between students and teachers as well as between the school and the district.

- They need call buttons (that work), phones or beepers to facilitate communication between the classroom and administration.

Teachers With More Input Into School Administration

- Teachers believe that school administrators should teach at least five days per year in the classroom to fully understand what teachers deal with in today's classrooms.

- In some districts, reducing the personnel at higher levels in the district and returning them to the classroom will relieve class loads.

- It would be helpful if state legislators would see what is going on in the classroom because the environment changes so much from year to year.

- Teachers want a voice. They want to have real input and decision-making authority. There is general support from teachers for more school-based management in the schools.

- Although teachers understand that administrators want to do what is best for students, teachers advise administrators to be careful with new ideas. Educators need to stop jumping from program to program so teachers can gain consistent experience in one area.

Equitable Class Size

- Districts must support an equitable student/teacher ratio. Class size calculations should be true class size, not based on a formula using all certified persons.

- Teachers say class size needs to be consistent, using a 20/25 to 1 ratio, especially with at-risk populations.

Support for Discipline

- Enforcement of the district discipline policy must be equal for all students. When teachers dispense discipline, they need the support of administration.

- Qualified counselors and support staff are needed to help with intervention techniques for discipline concerns.

- A Recovery Room for behavior problems could be beneficial.

- Some teachers say they want to get rid of in-school suspension.

Flexible Time for Teachers

- Districts should allow teachers more time for professional development, networking, public relations activities, planning, and visiting new programs.
- Districts could use flexible scheduling during inservice days.
- A flexible busing schedule would allow teachers to work early or late hours.

Support for Teachers

- Teachers need consistent support from everyone - districts, students, parents. They need support in all areas, including discipline and moral support.
- There should be an inclusion model for resource support.
- To boost morale, districts should celebrate great things that happen within the district.
- The superintendent and other top staff should advocate for teachers on issues that affect teachers.
- Teachers need to be empowered in reality, not just on paper.
- Mentoring programs for new teachers will help them gain valuable experience.

Leadership for Instruction

- Early intervention and literacy programs should be in place in all schools. Special groups needing programs are at-risk, alternative schools and foreign speaking students.
- School districts should follow the state framework for health and physical safety.
- Curriculum coordinators are needed for each school.

- Schools need valid, knowledgeable leadership with appropriate education experiences.

Practical Professional Development

- Listen to what teachers say they need for professional development.
- Staff development days should not be held during the first week of school.
- Inservice training needs to be useful, practical.
- Teachers need meaningful training in the use of new technology.

Insight on Test Scores

- Teachers need an accurate interpretation of test scores in understandable language.
- Educators should examine why there is a drop in test scores.

Higher Education

Enhanced Student Teacher Training

- The training of potential teachers needs to be more realistic and comprehensive. Student teacher training must be delivered by people who are in the classroom regularly.
- Colleges need to offer more courses that would be meaningful and practical for the classroom teacher.
- Teachers want professional development schools for internships staffed by experienced teachers (i.e., Master Teachers -- 1/2 day college, 1/2 day public school). This would give the teacher education program the boost it needs.
- Teachers need higher education to authorize certification renewal for internship programs.
- Student teachers need more training in technology and special education.
- Students need to actually see classrooms before they do their practice teaching. This could mean working in a classroom (three weeks in August) during their sophomore year.
- Higher education must allow first or second year college students to spend time in classrooms.
- Colleges should accept the performance appraisals of student teachers provided by their cooperating classroom teachers.
- Higher education should use more realistic techniques in teaching methods to teacher education students.
- Higher education should design a course to help teachers with accountability.

- Allow education students real life experiences so that they can understand what is expected of the classroom teacher.

- The universities and colleges should include all current safety guidelines in the education classes.

- Classes dealing with school law and school management should also be offered.

Professors and Administrators with Practical Experience

- Education professors should be required to teach in public schools at least one semester every three years. They need to be knowledgeable about schools and students as they are now, not 20 or 30 years ago when they taught in public schools. They should come and teach classes ("adopt-a-class") so that high school and middle school students can see "college professors."

- Administrators and curriculum leaders need to teach in the classroom. Staff members should visit classrooms to understand concerns of practicum and student teachers. The state legislature should also stay involved.

- Become familiar with district guidelines and processes.

Teacher With Input on Testing and Programs

- There should be accurate interpretation of test scores in understandable language.

An Open Line of Communication

- Professors should ask a teacher for real input and information.

- Get input from us about teacher education programs. There should be more listening sessions with teachers.

Better Teacher Education Experiences

- Use a practical approach to discipline management in the classroom.

- Provide a link to lower socioeconomic students to help them develop an interest in higher education.

- Accept Tech Prep courses to help students succeed and maintain higher standards.

- Give students the freedom to take random courses without degree requirements.

- More money is also needed in the classroom.

- Teachers need practical help in both theory and implementation. They want valid research on educational issues. Find ways to share current trends/changing laws with schools.

State Department of Education

Opportunities for Teachers to Give Input

- Teachers need more "Teacher Talk" sessions.

- Teachers want input on the state level. They need to be involved at all levels on issues such as

curriculum, testing, policy, evaluation and assessment.

- The Department must work with legislators to make some of these "real" changes suggested by teachers.
- Communication needs to be improved among all groups in education.
- The Department should continue to provide meaningful dialogue and act on it.

Support for Teachers

- The Department should support districts on discipline plans, mentoring programs, funding and staff development.
- Teachers need support from the Department for parent/community education in substituting portfolio assessment for the traditional grading and testing system.
- Teachers need practical help in both theory and implementation.
- Teachers need more information about tests (Exit Exam).

Financial Support for Classroom and Salaries

- The state needs to commit funds back into the classroom.
- The education profession should establish a career ladder. Teachers suggest funding and defining a career ladder for Master Teachers.
- Educators should recruit businesses for financial support.
- There should be equity in funding for buildings and technology across districts.
- State Department of Education officials should visit schools regularly.

- Educators should be able to report on exactly how district/school monies are spent.
- The state should support 25-year retirement and yearly salary increases until retirement.
- One teacher asserts that the state should provide scholarships for educators' children after they meet certain requirements.
- The Department needs to provide substitute pay so teachers can visit other classrooms.
- To help students achieve grade level mastery early in their career, more personnel are needed.

Enhanced Professional Development for Teachers

- Ideally, teachers want a paid sabbatical for professional development.
- Higher education should continue the school-based college credit courses available through local professional development.
- Students and teachers should have mentoring and/or tutoring programs.
- There should be valid and equitable teacher certification requirements.
- Only teachers certified in a curriculum area should be allowed to serve as a content resource to districts.
- Schools must be led by knowledgeable leaders with appropriate experience.
- A book of "best teaching practices" should be available for each teacher in the state. The book should include best practice by grade level so teachers of each level can see what is being done.
- There should be internships for recertification.
- The number of higher education degrees one has should not outweigh teaching ability.
- Standards for the use of technology in all content areas should be mandated.
- The Department needs to communicate to colleges and universities the need for certain courses at the undergraduate level so teachers come into the profession prepared to teach at-risk students.
- The Department must insist that local school districts make a commitment to implement teacher training and visits.
- The Department should offer parenting skill training to professionals so they can train at-risk parents in parenting skills.
- The Department could provide as a resource a video of exemplary teachers, a list of exemplary programs, or model schools with a contact person.
- Staff development should be flexible.

- Character education should be mandated, and teachers need training on how to integrate it.

- The Department should press the legislature for funding to implement a teacher directed inservice program that fits teacher and community needs.

Support for Special Programs

- The Department must financially support the early intervention programs and the early literacy programs which could prevent at-risk situations within all schools.

- Teachers need more input on the School-to-Work program. They are responsible for implementing this program but have not had a say on whether or not it is working.

- There should be mandated state guidelines for school safety.

- The Department should regulate which grades are tested in BSAP or MAT-7.

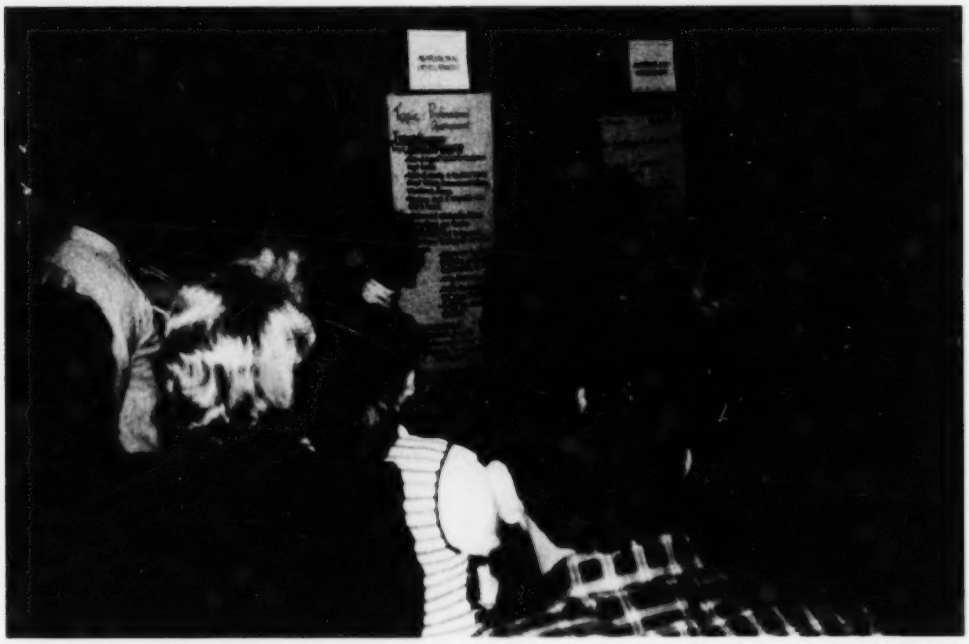
Parents/Communities

Get Involved in School

- Schools should invite parents in more often to visit.

- Children need as much of their parents' time as possible.

- Schools should encourage opportunities for involvement without monetary consequences.



- There should be an attempt to educate parents and the community of local and state safety guidelines.

- The legislature needs to include parent involvement in welfare reform as well as offering a tax credit to parents who are involved in schools.

- Businesses need to be involved in the continuing education of teachers.

- Businesses need to become involved in education. They could start by giving parents time off for teacher conferences without docking their pay or giving them a hard time.

- Business professionals can be used as resources. Business partnerships should be encouraged.

- Educators should congratulate businesses who are involved with the schools by ensuring the businesses get appropriate public relations for their efforts.

- Churches need to get involved with students as much as possible.

- Parents should be encouraged to bring students to work occasionally.

- Communities should provide internships, volunteers and jobs for students as well as after school programs.

- Schools need support from the Department of Social Services.

Support for Schools

- Parents must support the funding of schools and support the schools in their attempt to provide a safe educational environment.

Accountability for All

- Students, and especially parents, need to be held more accountable for the students' actions. Courts should enforce this.

- Students should not work so hard at jobs during the week -- parents need to enforce this.

- Parents need to make sure that their children are studying. They must discipline their children at home and not just rely on teachers to do it. It is up to the parents to instill the value of an education in their children.

Learning Activity Ideas

From Teacher Talk Participants

Learning Activity Ideas

From Teacher Talk Participants

During the three Teacher Talk sessions, teachers gathered in small groups to share their favorite classroom activity. Each small group came to consensus on one activity to be shared with the entire group. Following are sketches of the lessons shared by each small group. The teachers who generated these ideas do not present them as detailed lesson plans but as stimuli to the creative thinking of other teachers as they plan exciting and effective learning activities for students.

All Grade Levels/Any Subject

Lesson: Reviewing content for any lesson, any subject, all grade levels

Objectives: The student will be able to review content for a lesson or a unit.

Lesson Summary: I Have, You Have game. Students work individually or in pairs. There are answers and questions each on one side of an index card. Cards can be prepared by teachers or by students and serve as additional review. All students MUST be involved.

Evaluation: Teacher observation. This is a good game for problem solving, definitions, short answer problems and matching graphs.

Primary Grades

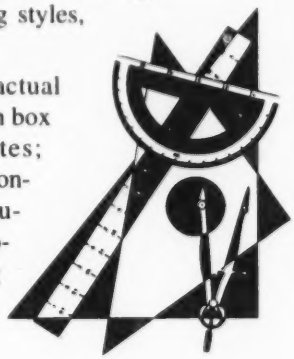
Lesson: Use boxes of animal crackers to teach estimating, counting, graphing or classifying

Objectives: The student will be able to estimate, graph and form a hypothesis using animal crackers.

Lesson Summary: Teams of two are given a box of animal crackers to: estimate, count, make a graph and classify. They will discuss the estimate and actual amount of each kind of animal in the box. They will make classifications and share their results.

Results: The activity is successful in keeping all students on task and involved; it incorporates diverse learning styles, and it's fun!

Evaluation: Graphs; actual number of crackers in box versus the estimates; teacher listens to the conversations of the students to evaluate process and thinking skills.



Pre-K - Kindergarten

Lesson: From Pumpkins to Pie

Objectives: The student will be able to use the pumpkin theme to incorporate life skills, community awareness, basic math and language skills and self concept into the class.

Lesson Summary: Literature: *The Biggest Pumpkin Ever* and *Pumpkin, Pumpkin*.

Life experiences: Students visit a farm or grow pumpkins. They study photographic records of growth stages. They visit a grocery store and find all forms of pumpkins. Students locate and read levels from various pumpkin products (frozen, canned, fresh, bakery).

Small group: Students make journal entries, learn to make books, learn to measure and weigh and make individual dictations.

Evaluation: Plan, write and implement a trip to the store with a grocery list, map, and "bank account" and purchase a "meal" to cook and present, report and document through pictures, photos and literature.

Kindergarten

Lesson: Secondary Color

Objective: The student will be able to recognize secondary colors and learn measurement.

Lesson Summary: Students make clay by a recipe, divide it in half and determine two colors -- red and yellow. The next day each student has a ball of each color clay in a ziplock bag. They perform a "magic" trick by mashing together the balls of clay and forming the third color of orange.

Results: Students have the opportunity to manipulate materials to form a new color. Ooh's and aah's fill the classroom. Students recognize size increase of putting two balls of clay into one.

Evaluation: Teacher observation of student manipulation of clay to form the third color.

Kindergarten and First Grade

Lesson: Growing a Garden

Objectives: The student will be able to create a visual representation of an area.

Lesson Summary: After planting a garden, the students create a map to represent the location and pattern of various plants. They devise a key to represent specific flowers.

Results: A map is created to represent colors, types, locations and patterns of flowers. Students add to the map as the garden grows.

Evaluation: Students are observed finding specific flowers on the map and adding new flowers to the map using the key.

Kindergarten- Grade Three

Lesson: Science: States of Matter Properties

Objectives: The student will be able to demonstrate the property of matter which states that only one object can occupy space at one time.

Lesson Summary: The students use basins of water, plastic cups, index cards, 16 oz. plastic bottles with holes in them and paper towels. They perform four tasks: wadded up paper towel in cup, submerged (inverted) under water; index card placed over full cup of water, invert, and remove hand; fill "holey" bottle with water; and transfer air from inverted cup to water-filled inverted cup.

Results: Paper towel stays dry, index card stays at bottom of inverted water-filled cup until card becomes soggy and lets air inside, the water stays in the bottles when the cap is secured, and the air moves into the cup with water and the water is pushed out by the air.

Evaluation: The students are able to explain why the "magic" tricks work. They relate to properties of matter; they see that matter has properties by which it can be identified and only one thing can occupy a space at one time. The students will be able to explain the role of air pressure and some of its properties.

Kindergarten - Grade Three

Lesson: Science

Objectives: The student will be able to observe if oil and water will mix. What will settle to the bottom first?

Lesson Summary: Water is denser than the oil; therefore, it settles to the bottom. Oil is lighter, thus it settles on top.

Results: Oil on top, water on bottom.

Evaluation: Students can write or draw what they have learned.

Kindergarten - Grade Three

Lesson: Bubble making; what makes the bigger bubble?

Objective: The student will be able to measure and compare sizes of bubbles.

Lesson Summary: Students predict how many drops of water a penny would hold. They test their hypothesis. They talk about surface tension then pour prepared bubble solution on tables and use straws to blow bubbles. After the bubble bursts students use a meter stick to measure diameter of the bubble.

Results: Students are able to compare sizes of bubbles using differing amounts of glycerine in the bubble solution.

Evaluation: Teacher observation and student writing.

Kindergarten - Grade Five

Lesson: The Teddy Bears' Picnic

Objectives: The student will be able to practice fact families in all whole number operations.

Lesson Summary: Using a picnic basket, introduce going to a family reunion and meeting all the relatives - from this, move to the fact families and how the numbers fit into groups or families.

Results: Students have a better understanding of an abstract idea by using concrete materials to learn. Students will be able to transfer knowledge across operations.

Evaluation: Students receive a family of numbers and apply what they learned by turning those numbers into the appropriate facts.

First and Second Grades

Lesson: 100th Day of School

Objectives: The students will be able to count to 100, to group 100 objects several ways, to read books concerning 100 items and write stories about 100th day activities.

Lesson Summary: Students bring in 100 items of their choice in a plastic bag. Read books concerning 100 items such as *One Hundred Hungry Ants*, *100th Day of School*, *Wolf's Chicken Stew* and *I'll Teach My Dog 100 Words*. Students read the books and stop at intervals to reenact what was happening in the book (by 2's, 10's, etc.). Each child is encouraged to bring in 100 pennies to donate to PTA. They draw self portraits of themselves as they would look at age 100. They draw and cut out 100 squares, circles, rectangles, triangles and ovals. They do as many jumping jacks as they can in 100 seconds, and determine how many times they can hop in one second, etc.

Evaluation: Teacher observation, journal writing, and active student participation and enthusiasm.

Third Grade

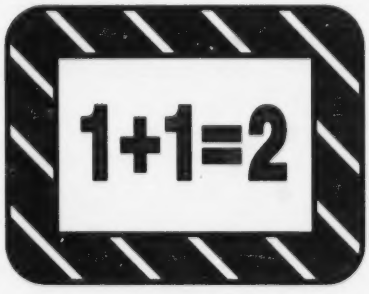
Lesson: World Travels

Objectives: The student will be able to integrate subject areas with the culture and customs of different countries.

Lesson Summary: This is a week-long unit involving the following activities: making passports and carrying them at all times; making an airplane; turning the classroom into a country with all subject area lessons revolving around this country.

Results: Students beg to learn more -- there's a great deal of motivation. They learn about other countries, which fosters a desire to learn more. They relate their studies to real life. The lesson incorporates school to work and international commerce.

Evaluation: Culmination exercises are related to various subject areas. Portfolio, writing.



Fourth Grade

Lesson: Hands-on Algebra

Objectives: The student will be able to use concrete materials to model abstract algebra concepts.

Lesson Summary: Each child is given a sheet with a balance beam illustrated and a bag of number cubes and pawns. The student will use the manipulatives to set up a given equation (for example, X = 3 + 8). The students will solve the equation by keeping the balance - removing identical quantities from both sides.

Results: Students quickly learn the concepts of variables and equalities. Slow learners are very successful.

Evaluation: Worksheets and teacher observation.

Fourth and Fifth Grades

Lesson: Getting Acquainted with Glymphs

Objectives: The students will be able to work cooperatively, develop pictorial representations of themselves and begin developing cohesive classroom relationships.

Lesson Summary: The first week of school students interview a classmate to gain personal information that can be shared. Introduce concept of glymphs as a pictorial representation of data and model examples. Students form small groups to classify data and develop symbols to represent characteristics. A group key is developed, and students make individual glymphs.

Results: Students become more comfortable with each other. Students experience data collection and representation. A foundation is developed for use of glymphs to represent academic learning. A foundation of graphing techniques/classification is developed.

Evaluation: Teacher observation of end product - cooperative group skills, interviewing skills and synthesis.

Fourth and Fifth Grades

Lesson: Lessons With Heart

Objectives: The students will be able to learn the definition of idiom, recognize idioms containing the word "heart," learn songs with "heart" in the title, compose their own song with "heart" in the title and illustrate literal interpretations of idioms.

Lesson Summary: Students learn idioms as phrases, not by meaning of individual words. Working with the music teacher, students learn songs with "heart" and write their own songs with "heart." Students illustrate idioms literally with "heart," for example, "Little Wheel Turning in My Heart."

Results: Students know songs with "heart," know the definition of idiom, write songs, and relate songs/idioms to real life.

Evaluation: Songs are sung to classmates. Illustrations are drawn of idioms. Recognize songs with "heart" in the title. Teacher observation.

Fourth and Fifth Grades

Lesson: Quilts in Literature

Objectives: Students will be able to compare and contrast several books with quilt themes.

Lesson Summary: Students read and compare several books with a quilt theme and view Polacco's videotape "The Keeping Quilt." Students respond in writing about quilts in their lives. Students take Accelerated Reader or Electronic Bookshelf test on various books read. Class quilt is made and displayed.

Results: Students enjoy quilt theme and writing about personal experiences. Students share writings and gain appreciation of literature. Class quilt is displayed with writings.

Evaluation: Writings are evaluated. Students' individual tests on Accelerated Reader or Electronic Bookshelf are evaluated.

Fourth and Fifth Grades

Lesson: Volcanoes

Objectives: The student will be able to identify the layers of the earth. The student will identify the cause of volcanoes through the crustal/plate theory. The student will identify the surface effects to surrounding environments.

Lesson Summary: To introduce the unit, we give the class a pack of M&M's. They predict the numbers and colors. Students then bite into the M&M's to see the layers of the M&M's. They compare the layers of the M&M's to the layers of the earth. Groups then do a ratio to create an adding machine tape model of the earth's layers. The students talk about the cause of volcanoes compared to the molten center. An activity to illustrate the crustal/plate theory will be with Jello and graham crackers. To include the environment we talk about cause and effect. If ash covers the surface, what is the effect? Show a volcanic movie such as Mount St. Helens. They look up information about volcanic effects.

Results: Develop understanding of cause and effect, relationships and group organization.

Evaluation: Draw a picture of the layers of the earth. Group watches TV show about volcanoes for specific predetermined details. List 10 side effects of a volcano eruption. Develop a time line of volcano research available.

Fifth Grade

Lesson: Simulated Dinosaur Dig

Objectives: The student will be able to experience an actual dig using the knowledge, materials and roles of an authentic dinosaur excavation.

Lesson Summary: After reading *Digging Up Dinosaurs* by Aliki, 5th grade students bury turkey bones on the playground. All students are assigned roles from geologist to paleontologist, and they use the appropriate tools to locate the bones (brushes, tweezers, magnifying glasses, etc.). We categorize bones and decide on a name (species). We extend the activity by measuring various dinosaurs' actual lengths using calculator tape. We predict/estimate lengths so students now have some actual knowledge about measurement (estimated and actual).

Results: Fifth graders increase knowledge because they have taught someone else. Students have had an authentic experience with dinosaurs.

Evaluation: Did the students measure correctly? Do they understand the process?

Fifth-Eighth Grades

Lesson: Science/Math/Technology, Geologic Time and Radioactive Decay

Objectives: The student will be able to simulate the dating of a fossil by radioactive decay and graph the results of their findings using and following formulas.

Lesson Summary: Students get formula/table for half-lives. When given various bones, students determine age. They do not necessarily have to have the actual bones. Any bones may be labeled or coded for students to evaluate. Students follow formulas, then graph the results (bar and circle graphs).

Evaluation: Research carbon dating on computers, internet, etc. Tell how an electron microscope would support your theory. If you were a construction engineer, determine if you would stop work if you excavated a huge pile of unidentified bones.

Sixth-Ninth Grades

Lesson: Adjectives and *The Grouchy Ladybug*

Objectives: The student will be able to identify adjectives and use them in a complete sentence.

Lesson Summary: The Grouchy Ladybug hand puppet talks about adjectives and the elements of a story. Read the story *The Grouchy Ladybug* to the class. Each student receives a paper plate with ladybug construction paper wings on the back.

Results: Each student picks another adjective for their ladybug story (i.e., the nice ladybug). Give the students 30 to 60 seconds to write/add-on to the story. They pass the paper plate/ladybug to the person to their right until everybody has an opportunity to write/add-on to everyone's story.

Evaluation: Each student reads the last plate/ladybug on which they have written. The class selects the best three. They hang all of them from the ceiling.

Sixth-Eighth Grades

Lesson: Graphs

Objectives: The student will be able to create a pictograph from data collected by student survey.

Lesson Summary: Students are randomly placed in groups of four. They create a survey question with three or more possible responses. The students survey 100 students from the school. They make a frequency chart from the collected data, then make a pictograph using a creative picture.

Results: Students learn to work together. They learn how to collect and analyze real data, therefore using higher order thinking skills.

Evaluation: Rubric includes: the 100 names, frequency chart, graph (which must be set up properly), creativity and neatness. Peer evaluation also counts as part of the grade.

Sixth - Eighth Grades

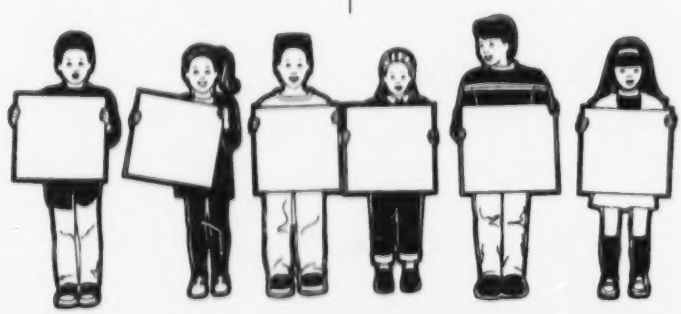
Lesson: Triangles

Objectives: The student will be able to identify acute, obtuse and right triangles; to identify scalene, isosceles and equilateral; and to conclude that three angles of any triangle equals 180 degrees.

Lesson Summary: A straight line equals 180 degrees, vocabulary. Students cut out a large triangle. They classify their triangles by sides/angles. Students move around the room to find like angles. With all triangles different, students number each angle 1, 2 & 3.

Results: Students "tear" their three angles from their triangle and tape it to a "vertex point" on their line. Students will be able to then compare their "taped angles" and will draw their own conclusion that for any triangle, the sum of the angles equals 180 degrees.

Evaluation: Students determine the missing angle from a triangle and write a paragraph telling how they learned the sum of all angles equals 180 degrees.



Sixth-Eighth Grades

Lesson: Poetry, Language Arts/Social Studies

Objectives: The student will be able to write an original poem following the optional models given.

Lesson Summary: After guided practices, the student selects a model to write a poem about South Carolina.

Results: Poems are placed on the hall bulletin board and in booklets with illustrations added using the technology lab.

Evaluation: Rubrics scale (self evaluation and teacher evaluation).

Sixth - Eighth Grades

Lesson: Reading/Language Arts, Social Studies, Art, Technology, Health

Objectives: The students will be able to discover what makes them unique.

Lesson Summary: Teach, discover, discuss and connect the poems "We Wear the Mask" and "Thumbprint." Students read the poems, then brainstorm on the meaning of the poems and the symbolic nature of colors. Students create mosaic masks with colored pieces of paper and words to represent their true self without a mask. Students take their mask and write descriptively about their mask, its uniqueness and character, drawing examples from their own experience.

Results: Students discover what makes them unique and their attitude makes a difference in empowering them.

Evaluation: Teacher observation of discussion. Creation of mask and thumbprint cards. Writing sample - rubric.

Sixth - Ninth Grades

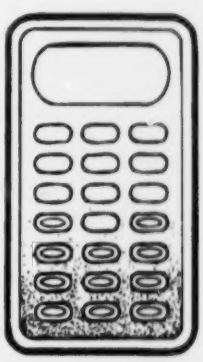
Lesson: "Japan" -- World Geography

Objectives: The student will be able to write and illustrate a haiku.

Lesson Summary: Define haiku, model an example, write poetry with teacher assistance and illustrate.

Results: Classroom display of haiku.

Evaluation: Grade format and content of poetry.



Sixth - Ninth Grades

Lesson: Heroes and Heroines

Objectives: The student will be able to make a list of characteristics of heroes/heroines; to list people who qualify as heroes/heroines; to create a bulletin board about a hero and make a 15 minute presentation; and to choose a hero/heroine and write a one page typed composition about the person.

Lesson Summary: Class discussion of heroes/heroines to define heroes, characterize them and list people who qualify. Groups create bulletin board on one hero and write a presentation. Individuals select a person and write composition to be given to that person as a tribute.

Results: "Hall of Heroes" from bulletin boards for all students to enjoy. Banquet to present framed composition to heroes.

Evaluation: Rubrics for group bulletin boards and oral presentations. Compositions edited and typed - graded on content and grammar.

Seventh - Eighth Grades

Lesson: Sculpture Clay Busts

Objectives: The student will be able to create a clay bust and also create a biographical sheet for their person.

Lesson Summary: Students are shown several busts (photos, books, etc.). They are taught how to make a bust. Students form bust, refine and finish their art work. Students are given short biographies of famous people and told to write a biography to fit their "person." They use the classroom typewriter or computers to print out the biography and present it to the class.

Results: Students present their busts and biographical information to school board. They also have photos taken for local paper.

Evaluation: Base level of expertise for bust construction - elaboration and craftsmanship (best of their ability versus rush job). Biographical information presented in a logical form. Creativity a plus.

Seventh - Eighth Grades

Lesson: Roller Coasters

Objectives: The student will be able to design a roller coaster and test for speed, utilizing the formula s=d/t, determine potential and kinetic energy, compare and contrast changes in heart rate and participate in physics and math data at Carowinds.

Lesson Summary: Students in groups of four will design a roller coaster from foam insulation for pipes in a given amount of time (depending upon the academic level of students). Materials are masking tape and 6 pieces of pipe.

Results: The roller coaster will be put together and working models will be explained. Contests will be used to determine the fastest roller coaster.

Evaluation: Observation. Draw/design the roller coaster and identify potential and kinetic energy.

Eighth Grade

Lesson: Haiku on Christmas Tree

Objectives: The student will be able to write a haiku, identify South Carolina wildlife and decorate a Christmas tree as a service project.

Lesson Summary: As part of an interdisciplinary unit, the Social Studies teacher teaches Colonial America and shows slides of South Carolina wildlife. Students write haiku after viewing slides. A Language Arts and Social Studies team teaches the lesson.

Results: Students make a Christmas decoration using South Carolina plants after foraging into the woods. Using parchment paper, students attach haiku to Christmas tree.

Evaluation: The tree is auctioned at a local mall to raise money for charity.

Ninth Grade

(can be adapted to other grade levels)

Lesson: Student-Led Conferences

Objectives: The student will perceive himself as a learner and share his learning with someone he brings to class (parent, aunt, uncle, etc.).

Lesson Summary: The student invites a parent or other adult to class to share his portfolio and journal with that adult. Portfolio includes writing, multimedia assignments and other student work.

Results: Student work becomes important to students. "Win-win-win" situation for parent, student and teacher. Excellent school-community relations.

Evaluation: Students are assessed on a rubric earning points for introduction of adult to teacher, dressing appropriately, sharing portfolio, working quietly when adults are leaving, neatness, and following the criteria for the portfolio. The adult must write a letter back to the student to place in the portfolio.

Ninth Grade

Lesson: Daily Oral Language

Objectives: The student will be able to improve writing and functional communication, mechanics, usage; and prepare for GED, BSAP, MAT-7.

Lesson Summary: Teacher assigns two error-ridden sentences per day for students to revise. One student goes to the board and tells why each revision is necessary.

Results: Students' writing and communication skills are improved. Performance on tests improve.

Evaluation: A weekly test is given with similar sentences for students to revise. TABE is also taken every three months; GED is given. For others, MAT-7, BSAP, etc. are used.

Ninth - Tenth Grades

Lesson: Volume Comparison

Objectives: The student will be able to make a prediction as to which of two cylinders formed by the same sheet of paper has the same volume. Students will calculate the volume of both cylinders (cooperative learning groups).

Lesson Summary: The students are given two plastic 8 1/2" x 11" sheets, masking tape and a bag of beans or rice. The students predict the figure that has the largest volume - "landscape" cylinder of "portrait" cylinder. The students fill one cylinder and see if the beans from one cylinder will fit into the other cylinder. The students see the comparison and then figure the volume of each cylinder using the circumference to find the radius and the formulas for the volume of a cylinder.

Results: Cooperative learning group, evaluation.

Evaluation: Three options: students grade each other in their participation in the group; each student is responsible for putting into words his personal estimate and whether it proved or disproved his prediction; the group turns in their evaluation and their worksheets with directed questions.

Ninth - Twelfth Grades

Lesson: Medieval Fair

Objectives: The student will be able to demonstrate understanding and knowledge of the social, political and economic society of the Medieval period.

Lesson Summary: After a unit study of Medieval Europe, the students demonstrate through an entire day's activities in the following areas: dress, manners, entertainment, food and music.

Results: Students come away with an awareness of the richness as well as the problems of Medieval society.

Evaluation: Self evaluation.

Ninth - Twelfth Grades

Lesson: Examination of Tap and Fibrous Root Systems

Objectives: The student will be able to compare and contrast the root system of plants selected from a high elevation (field) versus a low elevation (swamp).

Lesson Summary: Students use a quadrant with trowels to carefully uproot plants in two designated areas - an uncultivated field and a bottom land. Carefully carrying them back to the classroom, they classify the plants according to the root systems. The higher elevation produces mostly tap root systems, whereas the lower elevation produces fibrous. A relationship is made to two types of lumber produced in our state -- "upland" pine and "bottom land" hardwoods. Afterwards, through the Internet, a challenge is sent to other schools in different locations to compare soil types, moisture levels and root systems.

Evaluation: Evaluation is based on data table construction, graph production, analysis and conclusions.

Ninth - Twelfth Grades

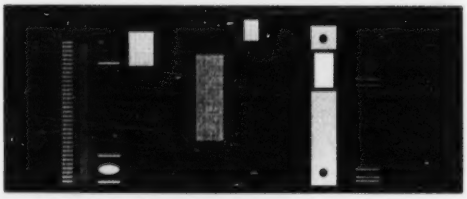
Lesson: Snapshots

Objectives: The student will be able to use the writing process creatively.

Lesson Summary: Webbing - activities, events shared with a friend. Pick one - write about it using details, verbal picture. Share with partner (self edit, peer edit).

Results: End result is a well-written "snap shot." Students enjoy writing about something close to them.

Evaluation: Rubric, read it aloud so others can "see" it.



Ninth - Twelfth Grades

Lesson: Public Presentations

Objectives: The student will be able to participate in Service Learning in the community.

Lesson Summary: Students dress in donated costumes at Halloween and make a presentation of stories and give non-edible bags of goodies to sick children at local hospital. Repeat this at a homeless shelter.

Results: Positive involvement in the lives of others, self-esteem. Repeat visits are usually requested.

Evaluation: Student responses and sick children's smiles.

Ninth - Twelfth Grades

Lesson: A Sandwich Approach to Writing

Objectives: The student will be more aware of the writing they do and the processes involved. Students literally and figuratively create a sandwich.

Lesson Summary: Students write a paragraph or more. Top, middle, bottom (like a sandwich) instead of beginning, middle and ending. Meat of sandwich is the middle - has to be a sufficient amount to satisfy the hunger. Top slice is the introduction, bottom slice is the conclusion. As they become more proficient, add condiments to make a better sandwich.

Results: Eat their creation and create their own writing sandwiches. Change the mind-set, how they think about writing. Talk about their sandwiches.

Evaluation Process: Ongoing process - the end result is that the students do much better on exit exams and writing across the curriculum and they feel more comfortable. Note: This could be used in foreign language classes also, particularly upper levels. A French chef can come in, a Spanish class can make burritos, etc.

Ninth - Twelfth Grades

Lesson: Graphing - Unit 5, How to Convey Information Through Graphs. Math for the Technologies I

Objectives: The student will be able to convey precise information via a bar graph, circle graph, line graph.

Lesson Summary: Students tally cars in the faculty or student lot by color, two-door versus four door and make, and convey through graphs what type of vehicle would most appeal to the lucrative teacher market.

Results: Students organize themselves on their own because they realize the enormity of task. They apply a variety of skills including calculating percentages, organizational skills, scale drawing, etc. Immediately you can see how readable their graphs are.

Evaluation Process: Students are graded on several points: accuracy of graphs, readability of graphs, personal contribution to group and group performance.

Ninth - Twelfth Grades

Lesson: Communism versus Capitalism

Objectives: The student will be able to list characteristics of communism and capitalism and write an editorial determining if Russia should return to communism or continue capitalism.

Lesson Summary: Students hear a speaker who has recently been to Russia. They find research sources on current conditions in Russia and chart the history of communism and capitalism.

Results: There is a discussion of how communism lasted 70 years. Students take a position and defend it.

Evaluation Process: Students write an editorial taking a position of either Russia returning to communism or continuing toward capitalism.

Tenth Grade

Lesson: "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost

Objectives: The student will be able to recognize and create a metaphor of life/road in an autobiographical composition. They can use the computer/word processor to type the composition.

Lesson Summary: Students read and discuss the poem. They discuss the metaphor "life is a road." Students write a composition describing their own lives in terms of roads (i.e., super highway, dirt road, bumpy, uphill, fast, trashy). They use the computer lab to type, edit, spell check.

Results: Composition and oral discussion and voluntary presentation.

Evaluation Process: Check sheet for following directions, using road metaphor and computer skills.

Twelfth Grade

(can be adapted to other grade levels)

Lesson: Election Politics

Objectives: The student will be able to become informed/observant on political candidates and issues without party label.

Lesson Summary: One-day summary: the students decide what are the major issues and their viewpoint on the issues. Then they are given the various candidates' stands on issues (without benefit of candidates' names or affiliation). They decide which candidate they would support considering the students' feelings on the issues and the candidates' stand on issues.

Results: The students learn that issues are important and learn to support the candidates' stand on the issues rather than supporting a political affiliation.

Evaluation Process: Self evaluation and discussion of issues - students have to defend their choice.

Twelfth Grade

Lesson: Medieval Festival (based on Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*)

Objectives: Students will be able to promote an understanding and appreciation of Chaucer's work and the Medieval culture it reflected.

Lesson Summary: Teacher introduction: Chaucer, middle English, and *Canterbury Tales* "prologue." Students choose characters and research related Medieval topics and his/her story. Students choose a team to work with (teams divided into art, food, music, costumes) for festival production. Students participate in a ninety minute festival where they enjoy a banquet with music, decorations, costumes of characters and share their stories and/or research. Special guests include school superintendent, principal and teachers.

Evaluation Process: Research paper, oral presentation, contribution to team and self-evaluation.

Twelfth Grade

Lesson: *The Canterbury Tales*

Objectives: The student will be able to analyze and experience the language during the Medieval period. To expose students to the cultural aspects of the period.

Lesson Summary: Students are assigned a character from *The Canterbury Tales*. Each student must compose an original poem (4-6 lines) about his/her character. They are videotaped outside as they walk. Afterwards, they eat dinner in the classroom (bread and ale [a cake square and soda]). Approximately three weeks later students take a field trip to the Medieval Times in Myrtle Beach, SC.

Results: Students learn more by going to the Medieval Times in Myrtle Beach and by actually acting out these parts.

Evaluation Process: Students write a critique of the Medieval period in their journals. Students shared their experiences in an oral fashion with the social studies and art classes at school.

Twelfth Grade

Lesson: "Getting A Job" (Economics)

Objectives: The student will be able to participate successfully in the job/interview process.

Lesson Summary: Students are given a background economics lesson on the labor market. They then complete the following activities: write and produce a resume; fill out an application and related paperwork correctly; participate in a workshop on interview skills with a human resource person from a business or industry; and participate in an evaluation session with interviewers.

Results: Students are prepared to apply and interview for a job. They are given an opportunity to evaluate their skills and accomplishments. Business leaders are given the opportunity to see student accomplishments and interact in a positive way.

Evaluation Process: Students are interviewed by managers from a business in their area. These are actual 10-20 minute interviews in which the student is graded by the interviewer.

Twelfth Grade

Lesson: Values of Solids

Objectives: The student will be able to compute the values of solids.

Lesson Summary: Students learn and apply techniques for finding volume. By utilizing manicotti shells, students use the "capturing" or "collecting" of shells to sum the solid a revolved region creates.

Results: Students write integrals expressing volumes of solids in the form 2pi\x f(x) dx after practice of problems.

Evaluation Process: Outlines are provided of content prior to examination. Teachers review material to be tested. Students work review problems in cooperative learning groups. Students have opportunities to work review problems at the board/overhead. Strategies for taking standardized tests are reviewed: review test, identifying "doable" problems before writing; tests with penalties - don't answer ones the student has no idea about.

Teacher Talk Evaluation

AN EVALUATION OF TEACHER TALK

Prepared for the Office of Professional Development

March 1997

By

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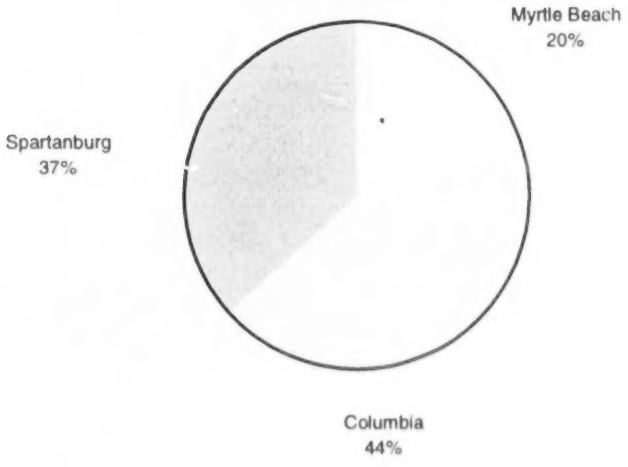
TEACHER TALK

SESSION EVALUATION

Three Teacher Talk sessions were held at sites in Myrtle Beach, Columbia, and Spartanburg. About 45 teachers attended the session at Springmaid Beach, January 26-27. The Columbia session on February 23-24 at the Ramada Inn included about 90 participants, and a slightly smaller number attended on March 3-4 in Spartanburg at the Wilson World Hotel. Figure 1 below depicts the percentages of participants at each of the three locations.

FIGURE 1

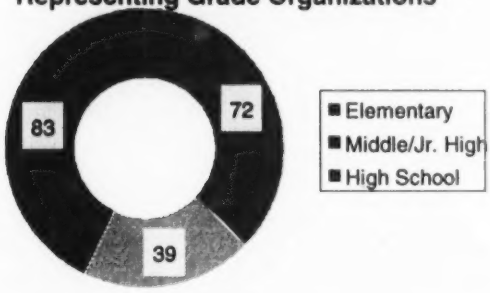
Percentages of Respondents at the Three Teacher Talk Locations



Because of the nature of the conference, which was designed to solicit teachers' opinions and suggestions on a variety of issues, the participants were divided into working groups consisting of elementary, middle school/junior high school, and high school teachers. Several participants who worked in higher education were asked to choose the organizational pattern within which they would be most comfortable working. Figure 2 depicts the numbers and relative proportions of the three organizational patterns represented.

FIGURE 2

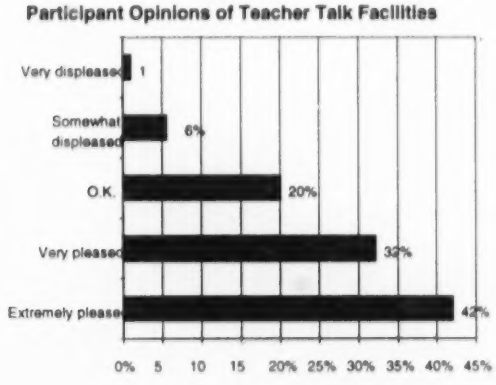
Number of Respondents Representing Grade Organizations



At the conclusion of Day 2, participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with conference (1) facilities, (2) climate, (3) team materials/activities, (4) schedule of activities, and (5) the overall value of the session. In addition, constructed response items asked which facet of the two-day conference was "most meaningful to you," and "what could be done to improve Teacher Talk?" A copy of the evaluation instrument may be found in Attachment A. A total of 194 surveys were completed by participants.

Items 1-17 dealt with (a) facilities, including their accessibility, cleanliness, comfort, and functionality; and (b) food and beverage quality, variety, taste, and quantity. Figure 3 below indicates that the contextual factors were more than satisfactory for the great majority of participants. Seventy-four percent (74%) of respondents indicated that they were "extremely pleased" or "very pleased" with the facilities. Most of the lower ratings came from the Columbia group where the conference room sizes were too small to adequately accommodate large group activities like the gallery tour.

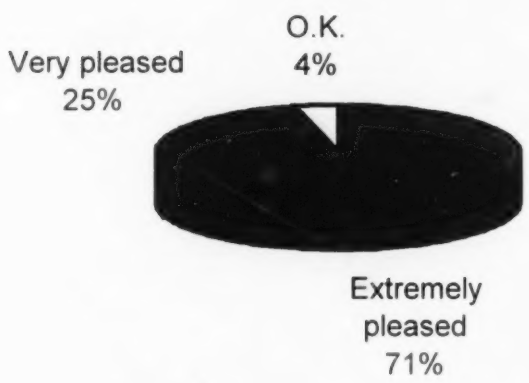
FIGURE 3



The climate items involved perceptions of safety, courtesy, and collegiality. Ninety-six percent (96%) of the respondents indicated that they were very pleased or extremely pleased with the climate (see Figure 4). Only two participants responded with a rating of less than "O.K." on this item--one was somewhat displeased with "perceived safety" and another was somewhat displeased with "collegiality."

FIGURE 4

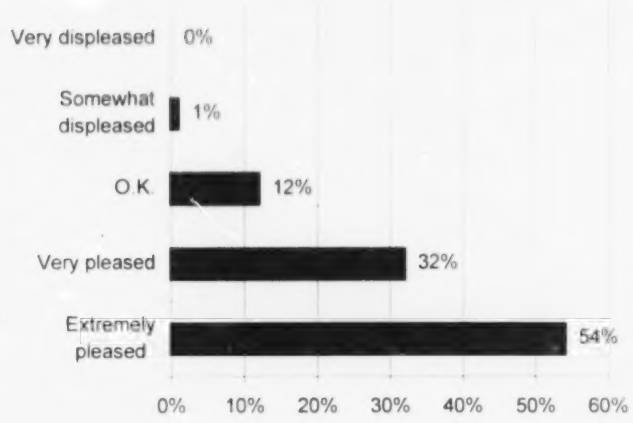
Participant Opinions of Teacher Talk Climate



Team materials and activities items were responded to in a positive manner (see Figure 5). Eighty-six percent (86%) of participants marked either "extremely pleased" or "very pleased." Respondents were particularly positive about "sharing with colleagues" and the "relevance to personal interests." The most common response to item 37 "What facet of the two-day Teacher Talk session was most meaningful to you?" reflected the way in which the session promoted collegiality, sharing, and interaction. Said one respondent: "*The Gallery Tour brought home the fact that educators across the state share the same values, goals, and ideals for students. Also, we face the same problems and obstacles.*" Another participant wrote that "*the interaction of the group members was very energizing. The enthusiasm and fervor of each member was impressive.*" A teacher in Columbia stated: "*The level of excitement about teaching and learning was almost palpable! Yeah, us!*"

FIGURE 5

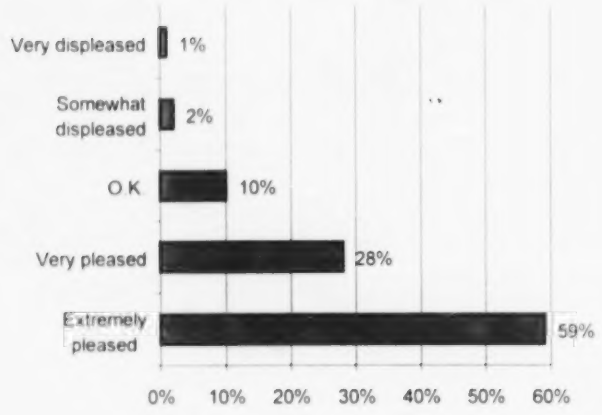
Percentage of Participants Assigning Ratings to Teacher Talk Materials and Activities



Participants were questioned about the schedule of Teacher Talk activities, including punctuality, amount of break time, and the length of day two. As Figure 6 indicates, 87% of respondents were either "extremely pleased" or "very pleased;" another 10% rated schedule items "O.K."

FIGURE 6

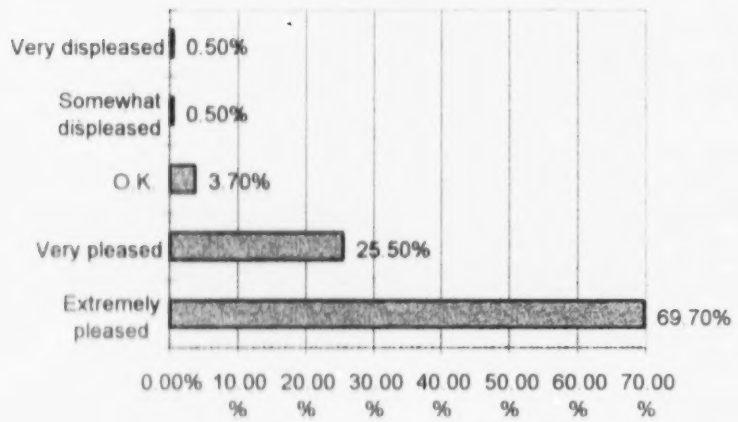
Participant Opinions of the Teacher Talk Schedule of Activities



Participants were very positive about the overall value of the session (see Figure 7). One hundred thirty-one respondents marked "extremely pleased" while another 48 indicated "very pleased." Seven participants marked "O.K." while one each indicated "somewhat displeased" and "very displeased."

FIGURE 7

Participant Ratings of the Overall Value of the Sessions



Many respondents suggested expanding Teacher Talk to allow more teachers to participate. The advantages of sharing strategies and teaching techniques were commented upon time and again. "*Please continue to allow teachers to dialog in this manner. Have more often.*" One respondent's comments were typical of many: "*feeling a part of the big picture ... and being treated like a professional*" were very important. Another teacher commented that the value of the session "*depends on how well you listened.*" In the same vein, another teacher commended the Agency for offering the opportunity to speak out and hoped that the messages were heard and respected. For many, the evidence of listening will be what is done with the comments and suggestions. Another, commenting on how to improve Teacher Talk said, "*I don't know - it was excellent. Please make it worthwhile by the application of teacher responses.*"

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